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ABSTRACT

This document reports demographic information about the students of Empire State College (ESC), a new, nontraditional college without a campus of the State University of New York. Results indicate ESC students differ from their counterparts at other institutions in several ways including: older, higher percentage married, and higher percentage employed. (Author)

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RESEARCH REPORTS AND TOPICAL PAPERS

EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE
SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. 12866

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following report was prepared by A. Paul Bradley, Jr., assisted by Judith Adamson, of the Office of Research and Evaluation.

WHO DO WE SERVE: SOME STATISTICS

A charge to Empire State College is that it serve students not generally enrolled in large numbers at the traditional institutions of New York: older, married, employed, low socioeconomic standing, minority groups.[1] The recent monograph of this office, 10/30: Studies of the First Graduates of Empire State College, showed that the College has enrolled and met the needs of at least a few people from each of these groups. This issue of Research and Review takes a brief statistical look at some demographic characteristics to see more generally what is the composition of the ESC student body.

In May, 1973, the ESC Office of Research and Evaluation systematically sampled the folders of 500 active students, approximately one-third of the students at each regional center. Table 1 indicates that the average age of the students in the sample is 33.5 ranging from 16 to 66. The Genesee Valley Center has the lowest average age, 7.2 years below the Metropolitan Center average. This difference is explained by the large number of students under 25 years at the GVRC and over 46 at the MRC. The Center for Labor Studies (Labor College) in the Metropolitan Center, with its many older students, apparently causes the pattern.

The sample of ESC students is 45% female. At the Genesee Valley and the Northeast, the sex ratio approximates 50:50 but the large number of men in the Center for Labor Studies at the Metropolitan Center pulls down the College-wide percentage of women. There is no obvious reason for the comparatively low percentage of women enrolled at the Long Island Center.

More than half of the students in the sample are married and two-thirds have been. The Long Island group has the highest percentage married and the lowest divorced/separated figure of the four centers while the Genesee Valley Center, with its large number of younger people, has the greatest number of single students.

Empire seems to have attracted many people who maintain full-time jobs while studying (54%) but the range on this dimension is great. One baffling pattern here: the Long Island Center with the second oldest student group, the second fewest number of women, and the highest percentage married, has

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1. This oft-repeated charge originally came in Empire State's formative document, "Prospectus for a New University College," February 8, 1971.

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TABLE 1

SELECTED STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS
EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE

April 1, 1973

Variables	Centers				Total
	Genesee Valley	Long Island	Metropolitan*	Northeast	
Number	125	119	139	127	510
Age					
average	29.6	34.7	36.8	32.5	33.5
range	16-51	17-57	17-66	16-58	16-66
25 and under	66(53%)	35(29%)	27(19%)	49(39%)	177(35%)
45 and over	14(11%)	29(24%)	39(28%)	25(20%)	107(21%)
Sex *(female)*	61(49%)	52(43%)	55(40%)	63(50%)	231(45%)
Marital Status					
married	66(53%)	77(65%)	80(58%)	69(55%)	292(57%)
single	50(40%)	35(29%)	42(30%)	45(35%)	172(34%)
divorced/separated	9(7%)	7(6%)	17(12%)	13(10%)	46(9%)
Employed	62(50%)	51(43%)	83(60%)	80(63%)	276(54%)
Estimated College Level					
2 years +	77(62%)	91(76%)	88(63%)	80(63%)	336(66%)

*includes Center for Labor Studies (Labor College)

the smallest percentage employed. This may be explained, in part, by the location of the Center, miles from most working Long Islanders' places of employ. To visit the Center means for many taking a half-day off. Another part of the explanation may be the current high unemployment in certain Long Island industries.

The number of people estimating their educational level at two years of college or more on the ESC Admissions Prospectus is also high (66%). Assuming that this admissions question is a rough proxy for determining how much formal credit students will transfer to the College, the high percentage of "two-years-plus estimators" from Long Island (76%) is no surprise. Traditionally, a high percentage of secondary school graduates in that region go directly on to college. It appears that many who never managed to finish their higher learning are now enrolling at Empire State.

The ever-changing nature of the Empire State College student body makes manual studies such as this problematic. Because students may enter or withdraw on any business day, "active" files change continuously. The implementation of accessible computer student information systems, now in advanced stages, will prove most useful for future studies.

July 1973